

*Prism* is a work for eleven performers involving a variety of improvisational structures. A continuously sustained, unbroken chord progression provides the foundation against which the other instruments interact in collaboration and conversation. The title refers to the way in which the ensemble's sonic spectrum moves through the course of the piece from a state of unity and contraction to one of separation and expansion.

Instrumentation:

Bb Clarinet  
Bb Soprano Saxophone  
Eb Baritone Saxophone  
Bb Trumpet  
Trombone  
Percussion  
2 Violins  
Viola  
Cello  
Double Bass

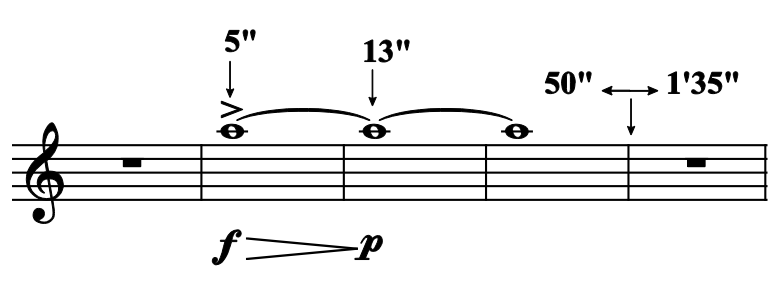
The score is in C. All instruments sound as written except for the double bass, which sounds one octave lower.

Duration: 15'58" – 16'09"

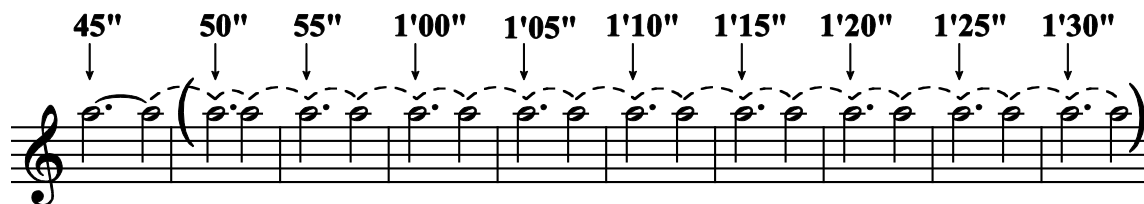
Performance notes:

Each performer uses a stopwatch. At the beginning of the piece one performer indicates the downbeat, at which time everyone starts their stopwatches.

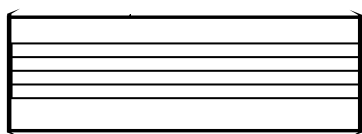
Entrance and exit times are indicated above the staff in minutes and seconds. These indications work slightly differently between the score and parts. In the score, elapsed time noted by the stopwatches is indicated above the staves. In the individual parts, time bracket notation is used to indicate a range of time in which particular notes or sections begin or end. For example, the following passage indicates that the note should begin when the stopwatch is at 5", should decrescendo until it is at 13", and should end somewhere between 50" and 1'35":



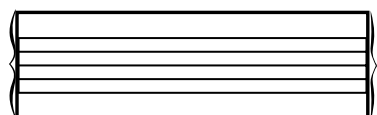
Within the full score each measure is equal to five seconds. Entrances and exits of fixed pitches are notated within parenthesis, and notes that might begin or end at any point within parenthesis are attached by dotted slurs. For example, the cutoff of the passage noted above would be notated within the score as:



**Boxed areas** specify improvisational sections, with the brackets on either side of the box indicating the type of improvisation. Dotted lines indicate time brackets within which a section may begin or end, while solid lines indicate that the noted section should be sounding. The different types of improvisational types are notated with the following boxes:



**Noise-based sounds:** These sections should be made up of sounds consisting more of noise than pitch. For winds this could mean multiphonics, growls, fluttertongue, key/valve clicks, air through the horn, etc. For strings, over-bowing, bowing the tailpiece, sul ponticello effects, knocking or tapping on the instrument, etc.



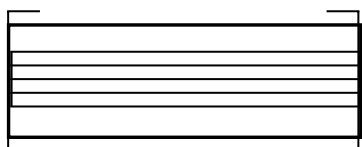
**Melody:** These sections should be made up of melodic material. The definition of “melody” is left to the player, but one should take into account other melodies being played currently or previously, overall dynamic level, the current chord structure, and also the rhythmic activity within the percussion.



**Pitch-based staccato tones:** The number on the staff gives the number of short tones that should be played within the indicated time. If a note is given within a box, that is the note that should be played. Otherwise, any note is possible. In the example given to the left, five staccato notes should be played anywhere between 14'30” and 14'35”. Stringed instruments should play a short bowed note, but not pizzicato.



**Noise-based staccato tones:** Similar to pitch-based staccato in that the number indicates how many sounds should be played within the time-bracket, but in this case the staccato tones can be of any sound, pitched or not, as long as they are short. For winds this could include valve slaps, slap tongue, short multiphonics, etc. For strings it could include pizzicato, slap pizzicato, knocking on the instrument, etc.



Sections within these sorts of brackets consist of specific textures described by the text within the box. These include:

**Repeated crescendos:** Repeat the indicated note(s) within the time bracket. Each note should last within the range of length specified (e.g. .5" - 2"), and should crescendo from beginning to end.

**Swells:** Repeat the indicated note(s) within the time bracket. Each note should last within the range of length specified (e.g. 3" - 6"), and should start soft, crescendo until the midpoint, and then decrescendo.

**Meander:** An upper and lower range of notes is given. The performer should slur from one note to another, choosing any note within this range. The speed of note changes should be medium fast to fast, and should stay consistent within the section.

**Single chromatic scale:** Start from the indicated note and play a single chromatic scale in the direction indicated. The scale should start at the time indicated, and end anywhere within the time bracket given at the end of the section. The speed should be medium fast to fast.

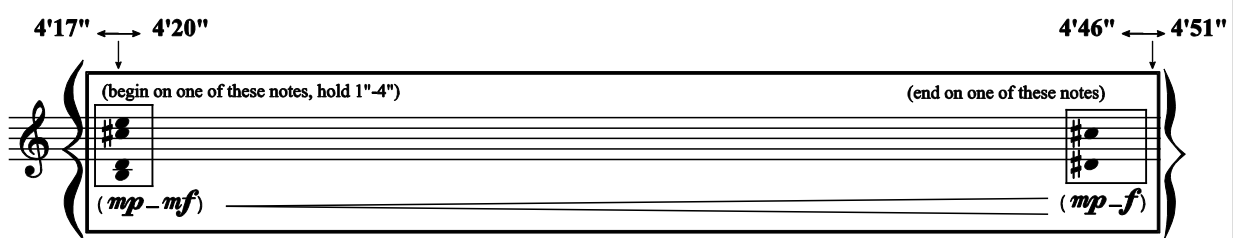
**Repeated chromatic scales:** Start from any of the indicated notes, play a chromatic scale in the direction indicated that terminates on the indicated note, and repeat until you reach the terminating note within the time bracket given at the end of the section. The speed should be medium fast to fast.

**A pair of dynamics within parenthesis** means that the music within that time bracket can be played anywhere within the range of dynamics given.

**Noteheads with an arrow pointing upwards** indicate that any note can be played within the section as long as it does not fall below the given note.

**Noteheads within small boxes** indicate the section should begin or end on the note(s) given.

In the example below from a single player's part, the performer should begin a melody between 4'17" and 4'20", starting on either B, D, C#, or E, and at a dynamic level of mezzo piano or mezzo forte. The beginning note should be held for 1 to 4 seconds, and then the melody can proceed, ending on the indicated D# or C# between 4'46" and 4'51". Between the beginning and the end the performer should crescendo from the dynamic range given at the beginning to a range between mezzo piano and forte.



In the score, the passage above would be notated the same way, except the sections within the time brackets would be boxed within dotted rather than solid lines (e.g. see the first violin part on pages 11 – 12 of the full score).

performance note specific to winds:

The clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, and trombone players will need to take breaths where necessary when a long series of tied whole notes are being played. Breaths should be as quick and inconspicuous as possible.

percussion performance notes:

Instrumentation is up to the performer, but ideally should consist of a variety of instruments. A snare drum should ideally be available for the rolls at 6'13" – 6'25" and 13'33" – 13'45".

Whole notes and tied whole notes indicate areas that several sounds can be played within, as opposed to durations of an individual note. Any instrument or combination of instruments can be played, unless specified by the section's text.

Otherwise, the same notational conventions noted above apply to the percussion part.